



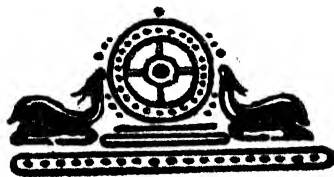
# EDGEWAYS AND THE SAINT



*EDGEWAYS*  
*AND*  
*THE SAINT*  
*POEMS AND A FARCE*

BY

**HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA**



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*DEDICATED  
TO  
MY SISTER SAROJINI*



## A FEW WORDS

All the poems in this little sheaf were written in a garden house at Dum Dum, twenty Four Parganas, in December, 1944, by way of relaxation during the strenuous period of research and composition of my film script on "The Legend of Lord Gautam Buddha". I say, "by way of relaxation" deliberately—since to me poetry has always been another name for holiday and real spiritual quiet and union into restfulness.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

Bombay  
1946.





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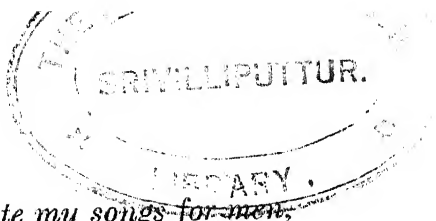
**THE SAINT**



# *Edgeways : Poems*



# Prelude



*I, poet, dip my pen  
In mine own blood to write my songs for men,  
Since every song is but a keen self-giving  
To tired life which, now and then,  
Seems but a drab apology for living.*

*Out of my heart's blood  
I mould music echoed from some Far's  
Fire-margin, aching aye to bridge the mud  
With many-wandering stars.  
Each line I write cancels the severing line  
Between the human and divine.*

*I do not write only because I can,  
I write because I must.  
I was begun when Time itself began,  
Rose-fire interpreter of humble dust.  
The ages take my vision undiscussed,  
Truth takes my word on trust :  
What god is greater than creative man ?*

# *Horizon*

Naught shall deflower or efface  
My virginal horizon-space  
Buoying creation in a round  
Of pulseless purity profound.

Notice my naked-curving calm,  
How like the hollow of a palm  
Out-stretched as though in one sublime  
Blessing above the head of time.

I who am formless harbour forms  
Of sparkling rondures, darkling storms,  
A witness to the hues that heave  
To mark for man his morn and eve..

I am all stillness, yet I cast  
My silvery nets into the vast  
Waters of sounds which leap and dive  
To keep the sense of time alive..

# *Dark Mathematics*

Dark-etched against horizons brimmed with  
glows

I am a strength of mountain peaks conjoint  
Unshakable, austere, without repose,  
Each peak tracing the stars from point to  
point

Drawing a graph across the skies to mark  
Earth's destiny of splendours in the dark.

What do the mountain-summits, taciturn  
Earth-giants, care if thunders crash aloud  
Or sudden lightnings wriggle out and burn  
The stars to ashes, tearing up a cloud?  
They laugh at thunder-thuds, they only laugh  
Transforming lightning to another graph.



## *Role*

I bring an empty cup  
That you may fill it up  
Dipping it into life-refreshing fountains.  
O may this being first  
Be served to men who die of ache and thirst  
That, at a draught, they may rise up as strong  
as mountains.

I am a desert sky  
Who see no cloud pass by  
Laden with mercy for the sands hot-glaring.  
O Love! let me be bowed  
Under a heavy burden of rain-cloud  
That rose-rich ways may open for the world's  
way-faring.

I am an instrument  
With music well-nigh spent,  
The notes no more leap into fine creation,  
And yet, I hope and long  
Even now to break into such fiery song  
As may be fit to celebrate world-liberation.

# Haven

We are borne forward on the inviolate wave  
Of some high will. Between the womb and grave  
Life sails upon the moody waters spreading  
Sad funeral-sails towards a joyous wedding.

Our bodies are the boats forever tossed  
Upon that wave which we have often crossed  
Between a birth and death, recurring distance  
During the timeless voyage of existence.

Propelled by what unfathomable urge  
Lo, now we sail along the sweeping surge  
And now we are a-float upon the still  
Blue undulation of that climbing will.

Around our speed dim creatures leap and bob  
Making us tremble...but He knows His job,  
The invisible Helmsman who with steady oars  
Works out the rhythm of unnumbered shores.

O boat of me! leave no storm un-enjoyed  
Now that through difficult wisdom you are  
    buoyed  
Upon that will bearing you ever onward,  
Wave upon wave, out of the darkness, dawn-  
    ward!

## *Songless Desert*

This earth of me is flowerless dust,  
Through dreamless nights and songless days  
It has become a hardened crust  
Under a fierce and naked blaze;  
And all within me grows afraid  
That it is final doom  
And nevermore will any blade  
Adorn it, nor a bloom.

God! every inch of me is packed  
With agony grown deep and dumb  
And all of me is dried and cracked  
Since no more do your rain-clouds come  
To soak me with a silver shower  
Of sweet compassionate rain  
That I, your desert-earth, might flower  
All over once again.

Let bareness once again be lit  
With serpent lightnings keen and sharp  
And violent thunders burst and split  
My brooding earth into a harp  
That it may tingle into hues  
After so long, so long....  
O may one mighty storm enthuse  
This desert into song.

# *Wisdom*

A crimson dot upon a stone  
Hath taught me more of the Unknown  
Than the wise prattle of those creatures  
Known as preachers,  
Highwatermark of empty monotone.

Sometimes the colour of a bud  
Paying pure tribute to the mud  
Inspires me to a deeper rapture  
Than they capture  
With their words of fire and blood.

Behold, the Little can create  
More wonders than the so-called Great:  
A squirrel's eye, a lotus petal,  
These may settle  
Accounts no man dare calculate.

# *Toiler*

I am the lonely toiler. I have curbed  
My passion to a purpose. I, a man,  
Labour for men, dream-fulgent, undisturbed,  
Fulfilling that irrevocable plan  
Which soon shall make the bare earth don a  
    star-vest  
And on his back carry the golden harvest.

Without self-torturing hate, without recoil  
Amidst all din, unnoticed and withdrawn  
I hammer out the gold of life, I toil  
Making the dark reverberate with dawn.  
The fire within me meets the fire within you  
And thus it is my toiling doth continue.

I am the silent toiler. Wide-unfurled  
Though yet unseen, my banner which  
    proclaims  
That every human being is a world  
With dreams for powers and thoughts for  
    living flames;  
With crowded street and broken men for  
    neighbour  
Unpublished and alone, I sit and labour.

# *Free Verse*

Time is the constant mating-time  
Of hush with music, clay with roses,  
And everywhere sweet colours rhyme  
In the enormously sublime  
Poem of earth and sky, which, who knows who  
composes?

Out of the grey and nebulous blank  
Of aeons lo! what rose-flame lighter  
Of lotuses which in a tank  
Rhyme with each other and may rank  
Higher than all the rhymes of any living writer.

And yet behold! how free they are,  
Nurslings of Nature, each creation  
Rooted, yet free. One high-born star  
Rhymes with some other in a far  
Poem of discipline beyond our calculation.

Authentic rhymes forever spin  
Like whirling fires with moods to light them,  
O free-verse writer! discipline  
Your vagrant feet to walk within  
Heart-freeing rhymes which hardly wait for us  
to write them.

## Wayfaring

Of a sudden you are freed  
Of the mind's intriguing load.  
Walk alone, O walk alone  
With nobody to call your own,  
O play upon your little reed  
While you tread the lonely road.

Let each foot-fall while you walk  
Gain in poise, increase in power.  
Concentrated in your tread  
Gaze at heaven overhead  
From a stilly silver stalk  
Bending like a dark blue flower.

True wayfaring is a deep  
Sacrifice, and every fall  
Of the journeying feet hath need  
Of hard miles to make them bleed,  
Faring feet which know no sleep  
Once they hear the roadway call.

Of a sudden see! your chains  
Slip and vanish on the air.  
Distance waits without a stir  
For your feet O wayfarer!  
While for you all heaven remains  
Breathless and exciting bare.

# *Hue and Shade*

Colour is one unchallengable reason  
Why men should cling to life, why men should  
rave

About the beauty of the budding season  
When gaudy butterflies and blue-black bees  
Rove in the grove in liberated ease,  
And even the dead beloved stirs and sees  
Her lover through the eye-like bloom upon her  
grave.

Nature works out her colour-schemes untrou-  
bled,

Spaces into perpetual colours run.  
The sky is brimmed with fires of many-bubbled  
Planet and star since all the world, indeed,  
Hides a great Childhood blowing through  
time's reed

Bubble on bubble aching to be freed  
And so the rainbowed play-time nevermore is  
done.

Being hue-drunk how could I be alone?  
A visionary I even in slumber.

Life hath its colours, death, too, has its own:  
Between the budded leaf and fallen fruit  
Some lonely artist seated at the root  
Keeps playing tones of shades upon his flute  
Ranging from changing life's warm red to  
death's burned umber.



## *Desert Inheritors*

Wounds have replaced warm roses. Nothing  
stirs

Except black winds which dally with the hours.  
Weed-gatherers have exiled the gardeners  
And with uncanny cunning do succeed  
In making men wild lovers of the weed  
Forgetful of a heritage of flowers.

Inheritors of the desert grim and bare  
We are self-crowned monarchs who contend  
Painting red struggle on the envenomed air,  
In love with ugly bitterness and strife,  
Driving authentic beauty out of life  
We record the beginning of the end.

Sowers of song-seeds have departed and  
Our gardens bloom no more. The songbird  
throng

Changes to vultures while the poet's hand  
In sad star-widowed solitude withdraws  
Leaving a multitude of hungry claws  
Closing around the throat of real song.

## *Love's Price*

I gave myself to you. Just to offend me  
You gripped me without ruth and sought to  
    bend me,

Bend me and make me bleed.

But then you only bent me, as you know,  
Into a strong and steady warrior's bow  
Ready to serve you in your hour of need.

Love! when I came to you full of desire  
All heartlessly you flung me into fire  
Seeking to work my doom.

But then I rose out of red martyrdom  
A perfumed life-breath of what incense gum  
Flooding your dim and solitary room?

I wept and yet, beloved! you resisted me,  
You struck me into agonies and twisted me  
Hoping that I should die.

But then, you twisted me into a rope  
To tug your ferry that was losing hope  
Under a thunder-driven stormy sky.

## *Artist Ache*

After the swift creation of a song  
Flame-tremulous, hue-thrilled,  
All suddenly I long  
For deep heart-stillness out of which to build  
My real immortality. These limbs  
Are then as aching pinions folded pure:  
Wonderful wide being interims  
Of dreamless vasts which burgeon and endure  
Star-fired and nude  
With exquisite creation-haunted solitude.

Out of this giant peace,  
Bomb of all beauty, throbbing space and time  
Brief life-runged ladders climb  
Towards some unattainable goal nor cease  
Frustrated with the impossible venture. Lo!  
Dim centuries between the dark and glow  
Drive bruised and broken on the way  
While poets yearn to say  
Somewhat of the great yearning past the veil  
Yet, at the end of masterpieces, fail!

That images dare fleeted beauty mint  
To signify that yearning?  
That chiselled marble, what inspired tint  
Suggest the Fire upon far altars burning?

O artist! all this terrible ache and beat  
Within the heart are but a home-returning,  
Each thing that you express  
One foot-fall of the spirit's viewless feet  
Shifting from loneliness to loveliness.

## *To A Bird*

We have but a little day  
O little bird,  
Let us sing our songs and go away  
Though our songs remain unheard  
And remain  
Unrecorded. You and I  
Have got to sing before we die  
If only  
Because our hearts are fraught with pain  
And very very lonely.

It is not a trivial thing  
When a real anguish work  
Its deepest self to songs:  
Behind our short-lived singing lurks  
Some dumb eternity that longs  
Through us to choose  
Release in forms of rhymes and hues  
And all the little fleeted notes  
A-tremble in our throats.

We have but a little day  
O little bird,  
To say what we would like to say  
Through word  
And rhyme,  
So let us lose no time.

Let us remember always time is precious  
Though timeless dreams enmesh us.  
What does it matter if we sing unclearly  
So long as we but sing sincerely?

## *Unknown Quantity*

This universe of myriad wonders built  
Captures the scientist's uncanny ken,  
One of our own has proven to the hilt  
Plants are sometimes more sensitive than men.

The Great Simplicity makes many a move  
Upon time's chequered chess-board and en-  
chants  
Some future scientist who yet may prove  
That stones are far more sensitive than plants.

All is a terrible miraculous tension  
Continued beyond human calculation.  
A sudden Einstein with his fourth dimension  
Dethrones a Newton with his gravitation.

Man's last discovery doth only mark  
Another foot-fall of the Law which ever  
Veils an Unknown inscrutable and dark  
Smiling at intellectual endeavour.

# *Thirst*

I have sung many songs by now  
And yet, somehow,  
The songs that I have left unsung  
The words that I have left unchanted  
Thirst in the heart to find a tongue,  
The longing oft remains ungranted.

This lonely being of mine is hewn  
Out of some tune  
Which is not born, but yearns to be,  
Whose shadowy echo sobs and lingers  
About my music, making me  
The solitariest of singers.



# Quarrel

Quite a deal of immature invective  
Passed between Objective and Subjective.

Said the former to the latter:  
Yours is, at best, but vaporous chatter  
While I, in every age, have been intact  
A self-existent undeniable fact.  
At every turn, in every known locality,  
Of earth and heaven, acknowledged person-  
ality.

And whether you accept me or deny  
I am thrice conscious, Fool! that I am I,  
The only one who do, in truth, exist  
Immortal substance for the scientist.

\*Ripening to rage, turning from warm to  
warmer,

The latter flung this challenge to the former:  
Have you not ever heard the world remark  
That I am all-illumined, you are dark?  
O Fool! without me you can hardly choose  
The nature of your fires and of your hues,  
Since I am that which lends you loveliness  
And on my moods depends your change of dress.  
Without me you can neither blush nor stir.

I am your bridegroom, swift interpreter  
Of mine own glows with which I light your face  
While holding you in my supreme embrace.  
And whether you accept me or reject  
I work beyond your narrow intellect  
Crammed with eternal values I exist  
By mine own shadows wooed, own splendours  
    kissed,  
And all the while although you may not know  
    it,  
Exquisite pattern-weaver for the poet.

And while a volley of invective  
Passed between Subjective and Objective  
The moon rose yellow over the still top  
Of a hill, a-staining the hill-top.

# Voice of Objective

*O what a richly yellow pull  
Yon moon over the ocean has,  
It draws the billows to a full  
Crash-orchestra performing jazz.*

*And when it rides the blue above  
All earth seems cradled safe and deep,  
In silent shadows lovers love  
And time is one pure flower of sleep.*

Just then a cruel siren shrieked and rent  
The flower-cool moon-enamelled firmament.

# Voice of Subjective

*The wandering ocean waves have swooned  
Under the siren's ghastly note.  
Yon moon is but a bayonet wound  
Plunged sheer into God's azure throat.*

*It is a bleeding ugly blot,  
I hope it will not rise again.  
Tonight what ruin may be wrought  
By some death-dealing aeroplane !*

*There are no silent shadows now,  
The troubled earth has held its breath.  
Anguish is on the lover's brow  
And time is a dark flower of death.*

Both Subjective and Objective  
In hot haste ran helter-skelter,  
(Forgetting all invective)  
To the nearest shelter.

# *Priestcraft*

I stand unmasked. The world is wide-awake  
To my intriguings. Tie me to the stake  
As I have done in scarlet history  
To those who dared to hold the mystery  
Of priestcraft in contempt. Long have I  
basked  
In golden sunshines. Now, I stand unmasked.

I have, what though it may sound strangely  
odd,  
Betrayed all mankind in the name of God,  
With psychological mind-mathematics  
Made ordinary men inane ecstasies,  
With foxy cunnings, hardly new to us,

Exploited the weak-willed and credulous.  
With deep-resounding temple-bells and deep  
Chants have I sung intelligence to sleep;  
With tricky incense-fumes that writhe and curl  
Made temple girl on youth-blown temple girl  
Writhe and curl also, yielding virgin charms  
To some imagined deity in my arms.

I have been careful to create divine  
Half-luminosities within the shrine  
Never increasing them to brilliant glows,

Since wise old priestcraft through experience  
knows

The hypnotism of half-lights which can give  
Stone-idols breath seeming to make them live.

I am acquainted well with every shape  
Of exploitation. I have mastered rape  
Both of the soul and body. Every flame  
Within the temple now is red with shame  
At all my past corruptions, bygone tricks  
Uncanny sacerdotal politics.

The State and I were friends once, unfatigued  
In purple secrecy we twain intrigued  
Against the people, rode upon their backs  
Nor yielded them one moment to relax  
But now both It and I seem going under  
Their dreadful wrath which detonates like  
thunder.

The Idol is no more my hiding place,  
I am found out. Men spit upon my face  
And I who played with souls now find my soul  
Become a cracked and hollow begging bowl,  
My voice, once chanting soft persuasive psalms  
From door to door begging uncertain alms.

## *Time, the Sifter*

Time is the sifter who shall sift:  
His master fingers absolute  
Shall test the tune, which hath a rift,  
And the true music, on his flute.

Nobody shall escape his strong  
Judgment that finally is passed  
And then, my soul! your life of song  
Shall be revealed to men at last,

To men whose judgment is but blind  
Whose words are uttered in a way  
Which makes them fleeter than the wind  
Blown over dead and flowerless clay.

Be careful, human lips that reach  
Out to the world in praise or blame!  
Since falsehood or of thought or speech  
Is fiercer than a bitter flame.

Time is the sifter who shall sift:  
In difficult and ruthless ways  
He proves that song was deathless gift  
And what was but a passing phase.

# *The Saint : A Farce*





# *The Saint*

## Scene

AT THE FOOT OF THE TREE LIES A MAN COVERED UP LIKE A DEAD MAN. TWO MEN ENTER :

FIRST MAN: He has been there for the past three days.

SECOND MAN: Covered up like a corpse, but he breathes.

FIRST MAN : Some say that he is the famous Benares Miracle man!

SECOND MAN : In fact. I know a blind woman who swears that, ever since she visited this spot yesterday morning, she feels that she is able to see, although her eyes are not at all opened!

FIRST MAN: He must be a saint. These saints have a way of behaving in mysterious ways.

(TWO OR THREE OTHER MEN ENTER)

THIRD MAN: Here he lies, I told you, and—you wouldn't believe me.

FOURTH MAN : Beside a tavern.

FIRST MAN : A saint! A saint!

SECOND MAN: What does it matter to a saint whether he lies in a palace of marble or at the foot of a tree which oozes with Toddy?

THIRD MAN: Beside a tavern!

FOURTH MAN: A saint is a tavern himself! He is full of the liquor called God!

FIFTH MAN: I swear that this man is a miracle-worker. The day before yesterday I was out of work, and I came and sat at his feet and prayed to him, and today, you see, I have a job!

SIXTH MAN: At the house of the wife of a betel-leaf vendor. The wife is a widow, left lately by her husband who has gone to the other side or, perhaps, to some other country. I have been appointed to ply the trade in his place.

FIRST MAN: A curse will descend on you for your disrespectful speech. You will see.

SEVENTH MAN: A curse! as if life itself were not enough of a curse? for fellows such as us, who have been turned into the streets without work, without a bed to lie on, and without a roof over the head to keep us safe and snug. What greater curse can your saints give a beggar?

THIRD MAN : And yet, you dare not approach  
that figure there.

SEVENTH MAN : I lay a wager I will....

SECOND MAN : Go on with your brag...Don't  
brag!

SEVENTH MAN : What will you give me if I un-  
cover his face?

SECOND MAN : I appeal to you for your own sake,  
don't... You will be struck by light-  
ning, poor fellow!

SEVENTH MAN : I don't fear lightnings. They  
are not half as terrible and ruthless as  
the frown of filthy exploiters every-  
where.

FIRST MAN : You don't fear lightnings!

SEVENTH MAN : No, I have learned, through the  
misery of life, to fear nothing.

FIFTH MAN : You will be cursed.

FIRST MAN : Would you like to try?

SECOND MAN : Yes, would you like to see?

FIRST MAN : Get that man out of the way.

SECOND MAN : He has come to spoil the atmos-  
phere of miracles.

THIRD MAN : Out with him.

FOURTH MAN : He has no respect for sainthood...

FIFTH MAN : He has no implicit faith.

SIXTH MAN: And a man without reverence and faith is worse than a plague-rat, red all over with venom. Drive him out.

ALL TOGETHER: He is dangerous. Drive him out.  
Call in the Police.

SEVENTH MAN: Call in the police to help a saint whose God is helpless.

FIFTH MAN: He is here to spoil the atmosphere of miracles.

SECOND MAN: I have heard of a betel-leaf vendor who has left his house and disappeared. A great drunkard he was, if he is dead, and is still, if he be alive.

THIRD MAN: May be that the widow will ask you to take the place of her dear lost husband... Ho Ho Ho!

FIFTH MAN: She has already! God bless her!

SIXTH MAN: Is she beautiful?

FOURTH MAN: Has she a little fortune? She must have! a betel-leaf vendor usually has quite a little fortune buried somewhere.

FIRST MAN: It is sacrilege to talk so lightly sitting by a saint.

(ENTER A SEVENTH MAN)

SECOND MAN: You are polluting the atmosphere.

FIRST MAN : They have only just come out of the tavern, and a drunken man has no respect for persons.

THIRD MAN : Like the law....

FOURTH MAN : But anyhow, a saint is a saint, and nothing can disturb him. One to him are dirt and cleanliness, health and disease, light and darkness, good and bad, laughter and weeping, death and life.

SEVENTH MAN : That is more the description of a corpse... But, joking apart, has anybody seen the saint's face uncovered?

FIRST MAN : Nobody dare touch his cloth.

SECOND MAN : One never knows what may happen, if one even dares to approach too near.

THIRD MAN : O, I get a smell of roses, don't you?

FOURTH MAN : And I smell jasmines.

SEVENTH MAN : I smell nothing.

SIXTH MAN : I smell, I smell...

SEVENTH MAN : Toddy!

THIRD MAN : He is drunk... don't notice him!

SEVENTH MAN : But why don't we uncover the saint's face and look upon his beauty?

SECOND MAN : I warn you, don't!

FIRST MAN : Our hands are the hands of mortals, full of sin and falsehood.

THIRD MAN : You are right... We are the children of darkness.

FOURTH MAN : Don't let us touch the cloth.

FIFTH MAN : We must wait for him to wake up.

SIXTH MAN : There is a blessing in that.

THIRD MAN : We may be cursed if we approach too near.

SECOND MAN : In fact, if we are to believe what rumour tells us, one man was struck dead, as if by lightning, because he dared to approach this self-same saint.

SEVENTH MAN : Did anybody see it happen? and if so, who saw it?

THIRD MAN : Of course, I actually saw it with my own eyes.

SEVENTH MAN : When was this, my brother?

THIRD MAN : Well, it was yesterday that I saw it, with these eyes, these very eyes.

SEVENTH MAN : At what hour of the day or night, might I ask?

FOURTH MAN : When the length of the shadow of the tavern reached the bald stone behind it.

THIRD MAN: When we were together in the tavern drinking.

FOURTH MAN: Yes, that's right.

SEVENTH MAN: But how could you have seen it if you were with me? and I was with you at the identical hour yesterday, you remember!

THIRD MAN: That is right, also... but somehow, I did see it, and it is no good your trying to contradict it.

SEVENTH MAN: But how could you have seen it?

FOURTH MAN: Well, there are so many ways of seeing it. These eyes that we say we see by are not the only organ of sight.

SEVENTH MAN: No?

THIRD MAN: I saw the man struck by lightning, I say, and it is no use arguing, and—there is an end to the matter.

SEVENTH MAN: It is always difficult to discuss when only one man wants the discussion.

THIRD MAN: I saw it with my inner eye.

SEVENTH MAN: What sort of eye is that, my dear fellow? Does it look like an almond lit with a safety match, or like a torch with a little bulb peeping out suddenly from behind a convex glass?



THIRD MAN: It is like a million suns and moons rolled into one.

FOURTH MAN: And it is no use trying to describe it to you.

SEVENTH MAN: A million suns and moons! You see many more than double! But you do talk like a saint yourself. Why don't you cover yourself up and tie down at the foot of a palmyra tree? You will be able to make it your profession sooner or later, and, besides, you will have the advantage of not being obliged to reveal your ugly pock-marked face to the world, you drunken mug! Well, if you think that I am talking nonsense, I shall go home and cover myself up and lie down,—by my pretty wife, heigh ho! much nicer than being a saint lying down at the foot of a tree without a mate!—at least, without a mate of whom the world knows.

FIRST MAN: Sacrilege. These drunkards talk sacrilege... Filthy fellows! Their mouths always stink like gutters.

(ENTER SOME WOMEN)

FIRST WOMAN: I have brought flowers for the saint.

SECOND WOMAN: Does the saint never eat? I wonder how he can starve.

SEVENTH MAN: You don't call that starving I call it fasting. He can have his food now, if he wants, but he will not, since it is still day-time. He will probably feed fat after we have all gone to bed. Fasting wins many disciples. One starves when one needs food and one can't get it. A saint, holy man never starves! In fact he is so well-fed that he looks like a turkey-cock or a pot full of butter.

THE TWO WOMEN: Let us build a temple to him.  
Let us worship him.

(ENTER AN OLD WOMAN WITH HER GRANDCHILD).

OLD WOMAN: O saint of God! cure my grandchild. She is being eaten up by fever. If she gets cured I will offer her to the temple.

SEVENTH MAN: And to the lust of idle priesthood.

OLD WOMAN: She will be the woman of God, and your bride when she grows up.

SEVENTH MAN: God and he are one. They will have to share the poor child when she grows into a woman.

(THE SAINT UNDER THE COVER SHAKES AND STIRS A  
LITTLE).

OLD WOMAN: O, he has heard my prayer. Miracle of miracles!

(SHE PLACES SOME MONEY AT HIS FEET AND  
DEPARTS)

FIRST WOMAN: A miracle. The child will be well by this evening.

(A YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAS BEEN SITTING VERY SILENT ALL THIS WHILE PICKS UP THE MONEY AND SLOWLY GOES AWAY WITHOUT A WORD.)

FIRST WOMAN: Money offered to a saint is divine money.

SECOND WOMAN: It is the money of the divine come back to the divine.

FIRST MAN: Lucky money, to come back.

SECOND MAN: O how luck the money is to come back...

SEVENTH MAN: Very lucky, indeed! It comes from the hard toil of some poor wretch who has earned it with sweat and ache and trouble.

FOURTH MAN: How many years of seeking the saint must have gone through...

FIFTH MAN: They say that when a man is lost in thoughts of God he behaves like an opium-eater.

FIRST MAN: He also sees strange visions, like an opium-eater.

SECOND MAN : And does not belong to this world any longer.

THIRD MAN: And although he is seen in the body is truly not in the body.

SIXTH MAN: He is pure spirit taken shape in order to deliver us from our own hideous and painful shapes.

SEVENTH MAN: I have heard it said that when a man eats opium he sees the same visions as the mystic sees. It must be a wonderful state to experience.

(THE SAINT SUDDENLY WAKES UP WITH A STAR)  
THE SAINT: Who said opium? O give me some, give me some. O I have been craving for opium... give me some, and God will bless you, my friends... Opium! Opium!

FIRST MAN: Look at his eyes. How they burn and glow? They are red with weeping for God.

SECOND MAN: He is shattered, his body is shattered with the sheer ecstasy of divine dreams.

FOURTH MAN : O Miracle!

SAINT : Opium!

FIRST MAN: That is another name for God. The saints have strange ways of talking about God. Some call him lover, and others, opium.

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SEVENTH MAN: Nowadays they call Him electricity.

(ENTER THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAD GONE OUT)

SAINT: Opium!

YOUNG WOMAN: (whispers): I have brought you some. Don't be in a hurry. Have a little patience, Here! (SHE GIVES THE SAINT SOME OPIUM. THE SAINT GULPS IT DOWN AND SEEMS TO BRIGHTEN UP. HE DOES, FOR NOW HE SITS UP).

SAINT: I feel well again. I feel I can walk. For the past four days I could not get up.

FIRST WOMAN: What's he saying? the miracle worker? what's he saying?

FIRST MAN: He has begun to talk his mystic language again. The young woman has given him something which is mysterious. These saints eat strange herbs and grow miraculous.

SAINT: Who is a miracle worker?

ALL TOGETHER: You... Why, you, of course. You, You have cured so many people of disease and sorrow during the past few days, you have done wonders for the village!

SAINT: I? have I? that is fine! As far as I know, during the past few days I was unconscious.

A WOMAN: Poor saint!

SAINT : Who calls me saint? I am not a saint.

ANOTHER WOMAN : Saints are humble. They never want to admit their own greatness (THE CROWD BEGINS TO FALL AT HIS FEET AND WORSHIP HIM. THE SEVENTH MAN LOOKS ON AND LAUGHS).

SAINT : why do you worship me?

SEVENTH MAN : Weak people want somebody or something to worship. Poor sheep!

VOICES : We worship you to bring upon ourselves true joy and blessing. We worship you for your humility. For your greatness. For your being able to fast for four days.

FIRST MAN : O give my wife a child. She is childless, O saint.

SEVENTH MAN : Ten to one, the saint is impotent.

SAINT : O give me opium.

(ENTER TWO POLICEMEN).

FIRST POLICEMAN : Here you are, at last. We have been looking for you all over your village.

SECOND POLICEMAN : What a heavenly picture! Is this the saint we have been hearing of?

FIRST POLICEMAN : He looks more like the betel-leaf vendor who has been missing from his village for the past few days.

SECOND POLICEMAN : Come along, Saint! You  
opium eater!

VOICE FROM THE CROWD :  
What? Is he not a saint, then?  
A miracle worker?  
A holy man?

FIRST POLICEMAN : Miracle worker? not he!  
Opium is the true miracle-worker. See  
how it has raised the dead! The dead  
is talking now, and walking now.

SECOND POLICEMAN : And he will only walk as  
long as there is opium in him. He is  
dead without it, nay, worse than dead!

FIRST POLICEMAN : By the way, what are all  
these flowers for?

WOMEN : We brought them in reverence to  
worship him.

POLICEMAN : They will serve for his tomb... For  
he hasn't long to live. Although they  
say opium-eaters live long. He would  
have certainly lived longer than neces-  
sary, had he not murdered his neigh-  
bour for the sake of a few annas to  
buy some opium with! A body has  
been found. It disappeared on the  
day he disappeared. The poor saint!

SEVENTH MAN : The murderer.

(A GREAT SENSATION FOLLOWS, WHILE THE OPIUM  
EATER IS HANDCUFFED AND TAKEN AWAY TO  
THE POLICE STATION)

